VOLUME 30 / NO 5 OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 1979

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Going To Bat For Seafarers *(page 3)*

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

CONTENTS

Volume 30 / No 5 / October-November 1979

1 Editorial: We Need Your Input

3 Going To Bat For Seafarers
The boredom and suffering at sea relate to us all.

10 A Heart Set on Love Can Do No Wrong by Joseph Gaer
Confucius answers some puzzling questions.

12 Weekend Retreat With Ruth Carter Stapleton
Learning about inner healing.

16 Self
A poem by Saigyō.

18 Renew Your Prayer Life by Ronda Chervin
Valuable new insights on prayer.

20 Ultimately Everything Becomes Boring
Poem by Sri Chinmoy—leader of meditations at the U.N.

22 The Friendly Voice of Silence
What happened in the quiet of Quaker meeting.

26 Conversation About Camp David
The Senator played a vital role.

28 A Reader's Letter by Betty Huey Saunders
Describes her response to a frightening experience.

31 Letters Received

36 Meditation and Prayer

Copyright ©1979 by Fellowship in Prayer, Inc.

EDITORIAL

We Need Your Input

"YOU may not think I pray, but I do. I pray in my own way. It may not be the way *you* pray. But I think the quality of my work reflects the fact that I *do* pray!"

My friend's statement caught me by surprise, for I'd made the erroneous assumption that he was an agnostic.

I suggested that he write something for us about the way he prayed, for I've found in my own life that the insights of others have meant so much to me in my own prayer life.

This is what we mean when we say we need your input. Please write and tell us about your prayer life — the problems you face and how you go about overcoming them. Or perhaps how you have not been able to handle them to your satisfaction so that someone else who has faced a similar situation may offer a suggestion.

For example, the Seaman's Church Institute *(see page 3)* distributes many copies of this publication to the merchant marine seafarers aboard the ships that come into Port Newark or New York City. One of the major problems at sea is loneliness and boredom. If

you are a seafarer reading this publication, perhaps you could let us know how you take care of these problems. So many people today are bored or lonely or cannot see a purpose in their lives. Your experience may be helpful to those who are not necessarily seafarers.

You may be in a hospital or at home ill as you read this particular issue. Sickness is upsetting and can be frightening. What part does prayer play in your life during such a seige? What can you pass along to others?

Possibly you are in prison. Certainly the frustrations and anguish of being locked away must be almost more than you can bear at times. Does prayer have a function in your life? Your thoughts may help others. They may not be in a physical prison as you are. People can be imprisoned in many ways. They feel frustrated and unhappy also. Often anger and bitterness are eating their lives away.

So many of you may feel your problems are isolated. However, there is a thread of similarity running through each of our lives. Tell us what prayer means to you.

Sometime this fall we are planning daily one-minute spot announcements on radio in which we will share the part prayer plays in the lives of different individuals. Write us a paragraph, a couple of pages, or whatever. We will be printing these stories also either in this publication or in the Fellowship News Letter, which, beginning in November, will go out every other month, alternating with this publication.

As you write, be yourself, be free, don't worry how it sounds. Write out of the depth of your heart and experience.

We need your input about prayer to make Fellowship in Prayer more truly a fellowship. Each of us in our own way is on a journey with God. We need to encourage and support one another.

Please share your prayer experiences with us. —P.F.

•

FAR too many people misunderstand "putting away childish things" to be forgetting what it is like to think, feel, taste, touch, smell, see and hear like a three-year-old, an eleven-year-old, a twenty-three-year-old . . .If I can retain a child's awareness and joy, then I will really learn what it means to be a grown-up.

—From A CIRCLE OF QUIET by Madeleine L'Engle

Going To Bat For Seafarers

The boredom and the suffering at sea relate to us all

AS HE STEPPED from the gangway to the deck of the old freighter, Gilbert Rodriguez had a feeling something was wrong. From years of experience with ships he had learned to "read" certain telltale signs—the way a vessel is kept up, the demeanor of the deckhands, the responsiveness of the officers. He was positive there was trouble on this one.

A "ship's visitor" from the Seamen's Church Institute in New York City, Gilbert had no legal right to be aboard. But for many years now he has been one of a team of five men who visit every ship that docks in New York City or Port Newark, New Jersey. His objective is to be of service to the crew in any way possible.

As he walked along the deck, Gilbert found the crew unresponsive when he tried to talk to them, handing out daily newspapers and magazines. The Greek captain ignored him.

Deciding there was nothing else he could do, he was ready to leave when he was approached by seven worried-looking Hondurans. Talking rapidly, the spokesman explained they were relieved that at last someone could talk to them in Spanish. Out of thirty men, they were the only Spanish-speaking deckhands and they had a serious problem:

"The captain fired us."

"Did he sign your papers?" Gilbert asked. The only way a deckhand can be fired is for the captain to sign the man's contract to that effect.

"No. He only told us." Furthermore, Gilbert was told, the men had not been paid their regular wages.

The difficulty centered around the captain's insistence that they clean the smokestack. This is a dirty, arduous job usually not part of a deckhand's contract. Special equipment is used for it.

The Hondurans said they would do it but only for extra pay. The captain refused their request and fired them. They didn't know what to do or where to go. The ship would be leaving soon. They were frightened about staying aboard. There had been a growing tension between the captain and themselves. "Accidents" can happen during a voyage. In the olden days, a sailor's life was hazardous and could be filled with violence. "Lost at sea" was a common epitaph. But even today, especially among Third World ships, mishaps occur and the facts are not always verifiable.

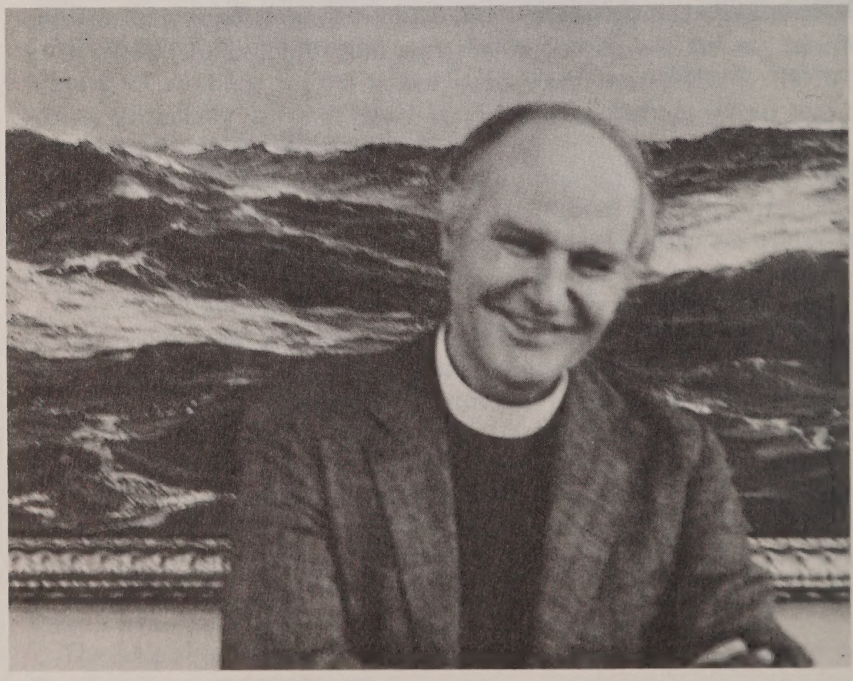
Gilbert Rodriguez reported the situation to the Institute, which hired a lawyer who understood how to thread his way through the complicated maze of Greek, international, and U.S. maritime law. Eventually the men were paid and flown home.

Problems like this are the daily fare of the Seamen's Church Institute. The director, the Reverend James A. Whittemore, a blue-water yachtsman, likes to say that "the Institute is a microcosm of the world. We are involved with ships and crews from forty nations."

At least 7,600 ships put into New York and Port Newark harbors every year, carrying about 320,000 seafarers (some of whom are women, hence the name "seafarer" rather than sailor). Half of them are from the Third World hired by foreign firms. Most of them are taken advantage of and have difficult lives. "Our role at the Institute is not evangelical," explains the director. "We're here to serve wherever there's a human need without regard to race or belief."

The shipping industry reflects graphically our changing world with its advantages and problems.

From right to left, A.J. Wong, captain of a Japanese ship, talking with Ship's Visitor Peter Tammens.



The Reverend James R. Whittemore, Director of Seamen's Church Institute.

Not long ago the words "to go to sea" conjured up romantic visions of exotic ports. Much of the work was done by hand labor and ships would stay in ports for a week or so, giving the seafarers time to sample local traditions.

Now ships are thoroughly mechanized. They are huge, electronic marvels manned by a small group of twenty-five to thirty seafarers. They can off-load in a matter of hours and because of tight schedules frequently are in and out of a port in six hours. Consequently, the crew seldom gets ashore and will be aboard a ship with the same group for as long as a year. Even if they have a few hours to kill, where do you go in Port Newark, which is simply 2,000 acres of storage space?

The Institute does have a small facility at Port Newark. The favorite activity there is soccer. When possible, teams from ships play against one another.

"Can you imagine the interpersonal tensions that must arise?" Peter Tammens, a ship's visitor, observed. "One time I was aboard this container ship and the captain was stir-crazy. He'd been aboard too long, seeing the same faces. He only had a few hours before his ship left, so I dropped him off at Newark airport and picked him up later. He was happy. He'd spent the time wandering around talking to people, watching all the excitement of people coming and going."

But today the industry has spawned a new problem for those at sea. There is very little actual work for the ordinary seafarer to do other than routines of ship maintenance and "baby-sitting" the equipment. Navigation is done automatically, the ships are steered by various systems, the engines controlled electronically.

A Scandinavian officer tapped a worn-looking coffee-maker on the bridge of a huge container ship and smiled. "This is our most important piece of equipment. It keeps us awake."

Obliquely he referred to boredom and alcoholism. There are probably more alcoholics among seafarers than in any other industry. "Eighty-five percent of all accidents at sea are caused by human error," said Paul Chapman, director of the ship-visiting program. "Whenever you hear of an oil ship running aground or one vessel colliding with another, it's almost always a human error arising from inattention. There's no mechanical reason for these accidents."

The Institute is beginning a research project to study the fatigue and stress at sea that result from boredom as much as from the dangers of being at sea.

In addition to the vital ship-visiting program, the Institute offers an astonishing array of services. There are 250 bedrooms for the seafarer's use, a cafeteria and dining room, chapel, library, counseling

service, post office, legal aid, an accredited school where seafarers may upgrade their ranks and become more knowledgeable about the latest technical advances. This school has a worldwide reputation for excellence.

One of its most cherished traditions is the Christmas-gift program. Every sailor known to be at sea during the Christmas season receives a package of presents—knitted cap, scarf, gloves, letter paper, and the like. Over 5,000 volunteers in every part of the country make and collect these gifts.

"I am one of the thousands of seamen," wrote a Muslim seafarer, "who received your holy Christmas packages. Thank you and thank you again very much for it. That moment when I got the gift from one of the ship officers will stay on as the best memory of my life all my life. I am trying to guess if you can imagine what it means for an unChristian one to be treated like that?"

The Institute was founded in 1834 by Archibald Manfield, a young minister. He was appalled that sailors were virtually without legal rights and at the mercy of thieves and boardinghouse-keepers who cheated and shanghied them. He badgered the wealthy men of the city to set up a place of refuge. A society was formed which literally brought the church to the seamen by mooring a floating chapel in the heart of Ship's Row at Pike Slip.

Today people are still taking advantage of sailors. Unsophisticated Third World seafarers not understanding U.S. money, for example, often pay $100 for a twenty-minute taxi-ride to New York City. One of the pamphlets ship's visitors distribute explains how to use the Path subway system to travel to the city for thirty cents. Sometimes crews have not been paid for months, or are left behind, or have a critically ill member of the family at home. The Institute is on hand to help. Of course, over a period of time the ship's visitors begin to know many of the seafarers, since these ships make three or four trips a year to these ports.

A private organization, the Institute depends on contributions for its existence. As with most such groups, the perennial problem is that of having enough money to continue offering their services. Incredible as it may seem, despite the fact that wealthy oil companies account for about two-thirds of all shipping, their individual contributions to the Institute amount to no more than $200 or so a year.

The Institute hopes to encourage more support. "Though our living standards of the West depend on ships," Rev. Whittemore said, "we don't seem to be able to focus on the fact that people man them."

Ship's Visitors from the Institute about to board a Norwegian container ship.

Confucius Answers Some Puzzling Questions

A Heart Set on Love

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS Confucius and his followers wandered in search of a wise ruler, and found none. While he was away in foreign provinces, Confucius' wife died. And by the time he returned to Lu he was already growing old.

The Duke of Lu asked Confucius to become his chief adviser. But Confucius decided to spend the remainder of his life writing a history of Lu, and in gathering a collection of old Chinese poetry.

Through his books Confucius hoped that his ideas would be carried all over China. And his pupils and followers, he hoped, would help spread his teachings. Among his followers were a number of famous scholars, and with them he spent many hours in discussion.

What Confucius particularly liked to discuss was the importance of education. Knowledge, he believed, was the greatest good in the world.

"Is education good for all people?" one of his followers once asked him.

"A man who studied for three years and did not derive any good from it would be hard to find," Confucius replied.

"And it is good to study at all times?" another follower asked.

"It is good to study at all times, but it is better if people become educated when they are still young."

"Would it be right if a man were liked by all his neighbors?" one of his followers wanted to know.

"No," said Confucius.

"Then would it be right if a man were hated by all his neighbors?"

"No," said Confucius. "It would be better if the good men in the neighborhood liked him and the bad men in the neighborhood hated him."

Can Do No Wrong...

By JOSEPH GAER

"Would it be right to repay good for evil?" another student wanted to know.

"No," Confucius replied. "For how then would you repay good? Repay good with good, and evil with justice."

Confucius was always ready to answer questions about how people ought to live, what they were to learn, and how one could become a Good Man. But he refused to answer questions about any god, or heaven, or life after death.

When asked whether he thought that there was a life after death, he replied: "Not knowing about life, how can we know about death?"

And he would say no more.

But just as there were some things he would not talk about, there were many things he particularly loved to discuss. He enjoyed talking about the ways of the Good Man, about poetry and music, and, above all, he loved to talk about love.

"What is love?" one of his followers asked him.

"To love mankind, that is love." he replied.

"But what is it?"

"To hold dear the effort more than the prize may be called love. The joy of doing something not for the prize one would get in the end, but for the joy itself, that may be called love. To do good not because you are going to be rewarded for it in this life or in a life to come, but to do good because you enjoy doing good, that is to love good. Love is its own reward. Love makes all things look beautiful. Love offers peace. When love is at stake, my children, yield not to an army!"

He thought for a while, then added: "A heart set on love can do no wrong."

WEEKEND RETREAT

with Ruth Carter Stapleton

Learning about inner healing

Ruth Carter Stapleton has been an intriguing enigma for many people. Her therapeutic program of "inner healing" has been often the center of theological controversy. One minister called her "a witch disguised as an angel of light." Others claim she is simply using the fact that her brother is President of the United States to further her own career.

Yet there are those who extol her, who love her, who claim that she has healed inner wounds that eluded conventional psychological approaches. She "healed" them when everything else failed.

There is nothing quite like firsthand information, so we signed up for a retreat with Ruth Stapleton at Holivita Ranch, about 60 miles northwest of Dallas.

THE RANCH HOUSE which serves as an office, retreat center, and a home away from home for Ruth is a modest structure perched on the side of a small hill. We drove through typical farm gates and were welcomed by a friendly John Wayne type who directed us to where we should park. We wondered whether he was a guest, a member of the staff, or a Secret Service man.

The ranch house is pleasant and informal. It is centered around a high-ceilinged room with a balcony at one end and a kitchen visible at the other. Various rooms open up beyond.

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Looking around, I notice local wildflowers, carefully chosen and arranged, adding to the house's effect of studied naturalness. After being name-tagged and warmly greeted, we were on our own for a while. Wandering into a side room, we found Ruth and several others watching a casette tape of a recent interview with her.

There is always an excitement about meeting someone who has become a celebrity through their work. After the casette ended and the TV was turned off, we introduced ourselves, talking only briefly before she left, pulled away by a staff member for a planning session. Because interviewers have often been unfairly flip or superficially critical, I could sense a wariness. She has been hurt often.

Other guests arrived. We were a mix of Hollywood celebrities, ranchers, decorators, and everyday people. Some came from a distance, others lived close by. Young and intense, older and intense, self-protective and non-protective, all of us were expectant. Though informality was encouraged, expectancy was the mood.

After supper, we gathered in the meeting room, where Ruth joined us. She sat to one side with a friend. The simple kaftan she wore enhanced her unselfconscious beauty. She was not the staged star of typical publicity photos. Her traditional good looks had an unusual quality. There is a certain aura about those who have traveled far on their spiritual journey. You know immediately you are in presence of something more than the person themself. Ruth has this aura.

Norman Elliott, editor of *Sharing*—a magazine having to do with healing—, was our retreat leader. A longtime friend of Ruth's, he sat on a stool, sleeves rolled up, and began to talk. He could have been in our kitchen at home, just chatting. He struck through the "now" barrier to "eternal" values. Inner healing was approached in a step-by-step process. You must first value the uniqueness of "you" and understand yourself in the context of the eternal.

Three hours is an unusually long time to listen to one speaker, but no one was restless. Perhaps it was because the "expected" had arrived and was leading our response. Ruth sat quietly, listening, absorbing the talk as one of us but with a searching love that seemed to make her even more attentive. Occasionally sadness swept across her expression—perhaps it was sadness for the pain of the people in the room who needed her help.

On Saturday, we were assigned to units called "family groups," led by trained leaders. The object was to get to know each other, to find out why we were there and what we expected to find.

My leader was a former disc-jockey, the last person you would expect. Very fast with good-humored uptake and very encouraging,

he was disarmingly candid about his own past. The deep wounds inadvertently inflicted by parents immediately related him to others with similar grief. He drew many pertinent facts from his Judaic training to amplify certain philosophical points. His life had been totally changed by Ruth's book on inner healing and his contact with her. His presence was an affirmation of the possibility of a new life.

Ruth took the evening session to speak on inner healing. She explained how healing could be effected by asking Jesus to come with us back in to our past as the "healer." If we would confront the pain with Jesus, he would do what was needed to be done and to cleanse and heal.

She took us back by her conversation to our childhood, encouraging us to search and question in order to find the moment of hurt, if it was not already evident. We were to visualize Jesus coming into any critical situation with his love and wisdom.

She outlined the method as she has in her books. If that was not sufficient, she offered to have a session in which she would guide memory, in the morning. Her experience showed that it was better to separate the sexes in order to have a free-flowing recall of past events.

She was obviously tired and her staff didn't want her taking on this additional responsibility. But she could not turn away from the very evident need in the group. Some were on the edge of emotional collapse. They had come to her for help. They could not go on alone any longer. Many times I saw tears camouflaged by a handkerchief or sleeve quickly brushed across a face.

She spoke and prayed with us for an hour, taking us back into our own pasts, sometimes a joyous experience, sometimes exceedingly painful. And, as we slipped past those years, we took Christ with us.

Later, she took the men on the same journey. The sense of sharing pain, different in its manifestations but common in its ability to wound, brought everyone together in a rare, close rapport. Superficialities were stripped away. Our real selves stook naked before the healing love of Christ. Through Christ's love we forgave all those who had hurt us and our sorrow turned into a joyous relief.

Bit by bit the family groups, numbering only five or six individuals, grew to know and trust one another. More and more we shared our experiences. Often we were able to minister to one another. It was a period of love, of caring, and of searching, of believing, of suffering with those who suffered.

Because space is at a premium, bedrooms were sometimes used for our meeting places. I remembered the vituperative innuendoes a woman reporter had written about those bedrooms in a Dallas newspaper.

(Continued on page 35)

SELF

BY SAIGYŌ (1118-1190)
Translated by William LaFleur

So, then, it's the one	*yo o sutsuru*
Who has thrown his self away	*hito wa makoto ni*
Who is thought the loser?	*sutsure ka wa*
But he who cannot lose self	*sutenu hito koso*
Is the one who is really lost.	*sutsuru narikere*

Copyright © 1977, 1978 by William LaFleur. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation, 333 Sixth Avenue, N.Y. 10014.

PHOTO BY CLIFF MOORE

RENEW YOUR PRAYER LIFE

By RONDA CHERVIN

THE LIVES of holy people of all religions are marked by constant prayerfulness. St. Paul advises Christians to "pray without ceasing." Yet most people find the idea of perpetual prayer puzzling. How can we really do it?

For some, it can be done by means of the famous Jesus-prayer or its counterparts. The holy word becomes so infused into consciousness that it provides both the foundation and background for all other thoughts and actions. It fills the moment-by-moment existence the way "our song" does the lives of lovers.

I love the Jesus-prayer myself and try to practice it. But there are other ways of practicing moment-by-moment prayer which you might find useful.

Praise walks. While taking a stroll with the children, dogs, or alone, I like to praise God for every beautiful thing I see: "Praise you, Lord, for creating dandelions!" "Praise you, Lord, for the color pink!" "Praise you for mankind's inventions — cars, lights, glass." I think God is pleased by this practice. I think He is disappointed when His gifts are ignored.

Prelude prayers. I find life cacophonous and jerky because I am apt to rush from one thing to another. Coming home from work, I grind my teeth over the frustrating aspects of my job, then start daydreaming about utopian universities where I might be teaching instead. When I reach my own door, I am aware that other problems lie on the other side of it. Is it surprising that whatever comes next usually irritates me? By contrast, how good it is to begin with a prelude prayer a few miles before I get home: "Lord, I place in your hands all the problems at work. Please forgive my impatience. Bless those I have harmed in any small or large way. Now I am coming home. I thank you for my dear husband and children. Please let me

(Continued on page 32)

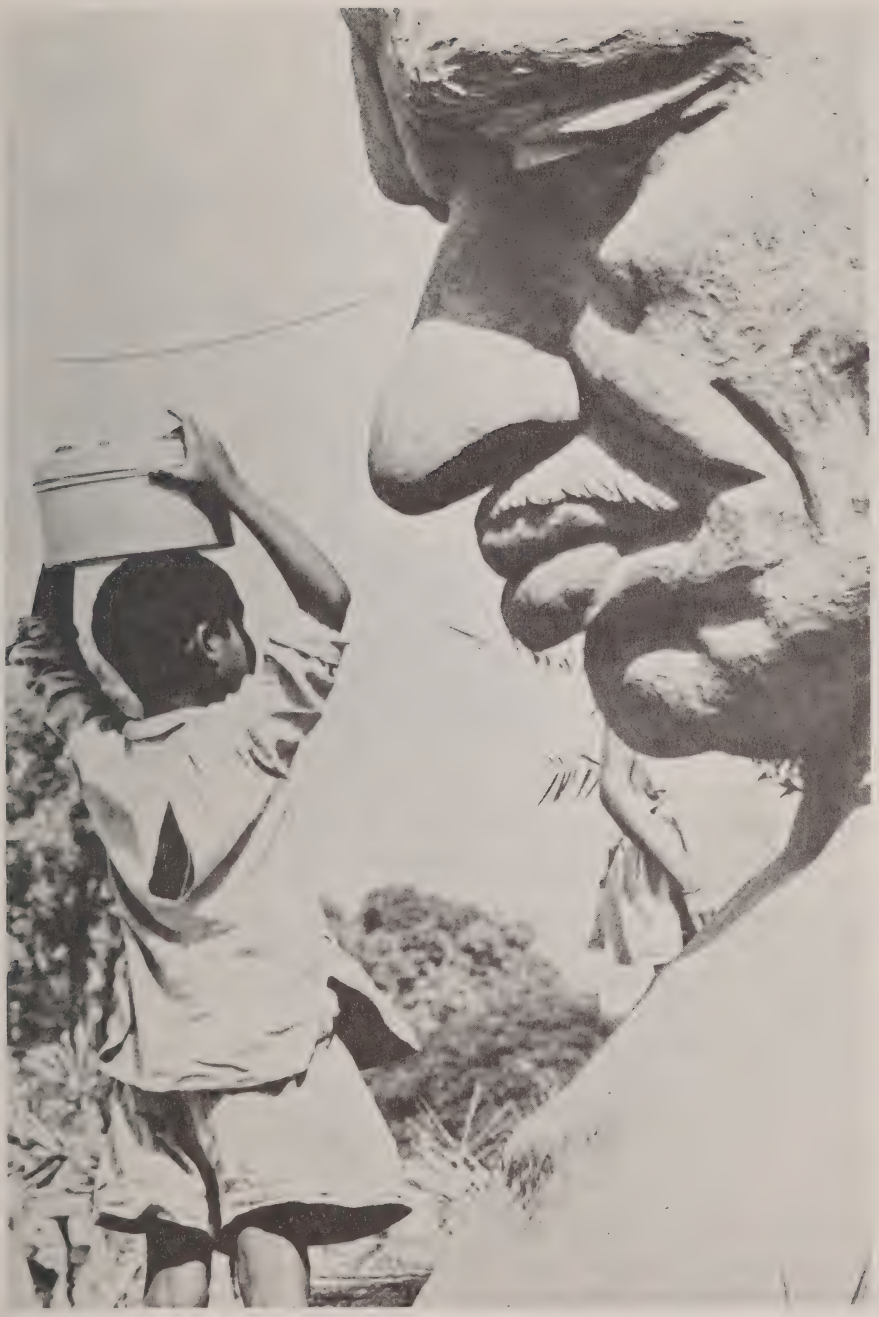
Ronda Chervin is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, author of Christian Ethics and Your Everyday Life.

PHOTO BY CLIFF MOORE

Ultimately Everything Becomes Boring

By SRI CHINMOY

Ultimately everything
Becomes boring.
Even great miracles
Become boring.
Even the tremendous powers of the cosmic gods
Become boring.
Even God the Omniscient
Becomes boring.
Even God the Omnipotent
Becomes boring.
But, but, but
God the All-Love
Never becomes boring.
Never.



RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Mahatma Gandhi's response to the "All-Love" was exemplified by his concern for the "untouchables."

The Friendly Voice Of Silence

There is that near you which will guide you. O wait for it, and be sure ye keep it. — Isaac Penington

FROM First Grade on, I went to well-thought-of private schools run by the Society of Friends in Philadelphia. First to West Philadelphia Friends, red brick, square, and plain, including its cement-paved iron-railed yard. Eventually to Friends' Central Country Day, in a former mansion in the Gothic style, where John Dewey's progressive education was practiced and attendance at Fourth Day (Wednesday) meeting was compulsory for students.

For meeting, a couple of hundred children sat on folding chairs set up in a semi-circle on the floor of the gym. Facing us from a plain-backed unupholstered bench were the headmaster and the guest for the day—often the famous Rufus Jones from nearby Haverford, occasionally some other Quaker celebrity, like Anna Cleghorn, the poetess, who, I recall, dressed like a country woman of the previous century, recited for us Edwin Markham's *Man With The Hoe.* No matter who the guest was, the spirit invariably moved him or her to rise from the bench and say something. To my childish mind, it would have been more exciting if every now and then the spirit failed to do its work.

It was essential that something be said if only to see the children through fifty minutes of silence. It was a perilously lengthy time to sit through without bursting into hysterical laughter, especially when, through the silence, Rufus Jones' pillow-shaped stomach gurgled and the headmaster's replied as in an operatic duet between bass and baritone.

Friends' meetinghouse in Princeton, New Jersey.

When not in danger of disgracing myself with laughter, I found the silence of meeting decidedly pleasant. I liked it, looked forward to it, hated to have it end unless, of course, that all but overwhelming urge to laugh came over me again. No doubt the emotional tumult of life at home made me appreciate silence. I sat in it with a sensation of safety I could find nowhere else except my bed when I was sick or, as often happened, I pretended to be. Surcease from tumult was one of my earliest needs. My classmates naturally did not share my appreciation of meeting. They deemed it the most trying hour of the week.

As I grew older, I began to lose these few sources of quiet. Constantly being taken to doctors in behalf of my sinus or my upset stomach or the fear of the dark I suffered up through the age of sixteen, I was no longer able to play the invalid and retire to bed for safety. Nor did the silence of meeting tranquilize me as it once did. Worried by the difficulties of getting along with a new stepfather and the prospect of going to college in the fall, my mind was too upset to enjoy silence.

In my final year at F.C.S., I was a leader of my class, depended upon in a way I had begun to resent, if not yet to rebel against, to do or say the right thing. As I left school on Tuesday afternoons, the headmaster frequently summoned me to the door of his car. "Tomorrow, Fourth Day," he would say, "we are going to have student meeting. We won't have a guest to speak. So I hope, my boy, the spirit will move thee— er — to say something!"

Which assignment (for that was how I interpreted his words) I carried out as dutifully as I did all my other duties. Next day, at meeting, forcing myself to wait for half an hour, growing more and more nervous at the prospect of getting to my feet, I would recite the words which I had written out and memorized the night before. No matter what I said, it pleased the headmaster, who shook my hand afterwards with Maine-woods heartiness. It also pleased the elderly members of the faculty. It did not sit well with my schoolmates, used as they were to my zeal to shine. That it meant nothing to me myself I don't believe I noticed.

AFTER leaving school, I did not attend meeting again for thirty years. During that interval I experienced no silence other than the terrible inner one that accompanies the battle of the ego against the universe. When this venture ended, as it had to, in collapse, I happened to be befriended by an older man of the Quaker persuasion. It was at his kind invitation that I accompanied him one Sunday morning of an inordinately hot autumn to the Friends' meetinghouse in the suburban town where my crash had landed me.

Although I was starting to get well, I was not well yet, and as I followed my friend into the meetinghouse I was painfully conscious of the morning's heat, which I was afraid might cause me to do or say something offensive, and of the presence in the ancient handcarved pews of many people, who would be the ones witnessing whatever awful act my frayed nerves and despair might lead me to perpetrate.

What I particularly minded was the silence. Wholly unused to it by now, I was made so nervous by it that my fears turned into downright panic. It was also physically unbearable, compounded as it was that fall morning of the cries of birds in a nearby woods, of a reek as strong as ammonia of grass and leaves and sun with the rot of the meetinghouse in which I sat, said to be more than two centuries old.

Out of courtesy to the friend who was trying to help me, also out of a lifelong dread of making myself conspicuous, I sat where I was and steeled myself. In order to hold myself in the pew I placed a hand on its rough-textured thin cushion and hung on . . .

What happened to change a moment of panic into something else, I don't know. Maybe the memory of so many Friends' meetings attended so long ago, maybe a longing for serenity which my friend told me I could find if I wanted it enough. The silence of the meeting all of a sudden became a pleasure to me—a release from the noise of my life, my being, my mind, an inner feeling that was as delightful as a stroll into the woods outside.

While this was happening to me, someone arose and spoke—a short, stout woman with a plainness of dress I had not seen since the visit of Anna Cleghorn years back. I did not hear what the woman said. My attention was concentrated on the silence under her voice, under the bird songs, under the Atlantic swelling of the wind among the leaves of the treetops.

"I enjoyed it," I told my friend when the meeting ended with handshakes among everyone present. "I don't know what I liked about it, but I think it was the silence."

"Yes," he said. "Sometimes I enjoy the silence the way I do a snowfall in the winter."

When he phoned at the end of the week to invite me to meeting again, he pointedly asked me to accompany him for the sake of the silence I had enjoyed so much. "Silence is the prerequisite," he said. "The first thing you must find is silence."

SOMETIME later, when the weather was getting on toward winter, my friend and I were attending meeting together every First Day. One morning, as a fire flamed back of a handsome eighteenth-century

(Continued on page 34)

CONVERSATION ABOUT CAMP DAVID

ONE of the most significant and dramatic events of 1978 was the series of meetings held at Camp David between Israel and Egypt with the United States mediating. The drama was in fact that prayer lay at the heart of all the meetings. You may recall that Fellowship in Prayer supported this attempt at peace with widespread advertising. Though the results may be less than hoped for, accords were signed—the first to be signed by the two principals in two thousand years—and a measure of peace exists between Israel and Egypt. Where previously there had been no communication between the adversaries other than threats and recriminations, there are now frequent conversations at a high level.

Senator Richard Stone, Democrat of Florida, lent his prestige and efforts to make the Camp David meetings a success. Though not present at them, he strongly endorsed this unusual attempt to undergird an international meeting with prayer. A year has passed since the meetings, and we asked him how he felt about them in retrospect.

"This was an important breakthrough," he said. "We've neglected the element of prayer for too long. It presented a great opportunity for a Mideast solution. It's the commonality of belief that can bring these three nations together. Our approach in the past has been secular rather than religious, and yet each of these nations has a strong religious base. Christians, Jews, and Muslims all have the Old Testament in common. It is this commonality that makes such a strong bond. It should be a very important element in our Mideast relations. I believe the Camp David meetings are one of President Carter's most important accomplishments."

Did the idea originate with the White House?

"I believe it did."

(Continued on page 33)

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Senator Stone played a vital role in unlocking the stalemated peace-talks between Israel and Egypt.

A Reader's Letter

Describes her response to a frightening experience

Dear Peter:

I thought you might be interested in an experience I had related to prayer.

Not too long after Aulus and I were married and living in a St. Louis suburb, I walked to my parents home one evening after dinner. I stayed longer than I should have, that moonless, dark night.

When it was time for me to leave and walk the mile back home, Dad was obviously worried about my safety, walking alone so late at night. "I'm not afraid of anything I see first," I said, laughing. "Besides, I'm a fast walker." He told me about a crime wave current in the county, a gang of males and females which had been terrorizing the area with theft-murders. I promised to stay on well-lighted streets, except (I remembered without saying so) on those three blocks which were totally unprotected, unlighted, and overgrown with tall brush and weeds. Even when my mother pointed to my engagement ring and gold necklace, I was not afraid.

"I'll be fine," I said, kissing Dad and her goodbye.

"Well, we're going to pray for you, Betty," Mother said. "You still believe in prayer, don't you?"

Her words gave me pause. Having been trained from infancy to pray, and having always prayed secretly and in church, I was a bit cocky, perhaps, in the way I took it for granted that I would be protected in any circumstance.

"Of course," I said, "I'll stay on the lighted streets except for a couple of blocks. Then I'm all but home."

I buzzed down Main Street and reached "the couple of blocks." They extended along a wide, undeveloped area of vacant lots which ended at a group of dark, abandoned warehouses.

I had gone about a third of the way across this area when I heard footsteps, two pairs, behind me. The more I hurried, the faster they came. I was soon wedged in between two husky women who held me tightly with a gun in my back. One said, "Walk normally and pretend we're going to go for a nice, friendly walk."

You do an awful lot of thinking in two blocks when your life is being threatened and you're heading for warehouses that loomed as great ominous shadows ahead. Feeling such fear . . . searching how to get out of this situation . . . being pushed to a fast walk . . . . One woman put her hand over my mouth to mute a starting scream . . . Had I been too sure about praying? . . . too self-assured? . . . too sure He watched over me? . . . taking Him for granted? I realized I could be walking into a horrible death.

My inner praying matched the rapid beating of my heart. I prayed looking around for a way to escape. There was none. There was only a flashlight signal from the warehouse and the laugh of one of the women when she said, "They're there!" The other said, "Don't say anything in front of her. . . ." The first laughed, "She won't remember anything after a little while." They pushed and shoved me faster and faster through the blank, black fields of weeds. . . .

We were getting nearer to the warehouses on the far side of the vacant lot. I felt weak and helpless. My heart seemed to jump eighteen inches up and down inside of me as I prayed constantly in my mind to God for help. The black weeds higher than my head overwhelmed me with a feeling of abandonment.

At that moment a realization came. . . . I was not alone. . . . God was there. . . .

I had been praying to Him. Now at this moment I knew automatic did not mean sincere. We were getting closer and closer to the warehouses. I was still being pressed and pushed. There were no cars, no police, no lights around.

Eyes closed, body wet with perspiration of fear, I prayed again, this time not just sincerely but humbly, desperately, pitifully: "God in heaven, have I taken you for granted? Forgive me, please! Help me! I don't want to die. Please God, find some way to get out of this!" My walking faltered.

The women gave me violent shoves. "Move, you! Move!"

My eyes opened, as an inexplicable surge of power and courage brought me to focus.

A transport truck came along not fifteen yards away from where we were among the weeds. How I did it, I do not know, but I wrenched free and ran . . . maybe my hurdle-jumping days helped. The women chased me, but I outran them to dash right in front of that huge truck so close I could feel the heat of its motor. Brakes screeched. The truck yanked to one side, inches away from me. On the other side of the street, I saw the shadowy figures of the women running from the light.

The truck driver leaned out of his cab to yell at me: "Lady, you might have got killed!"

"Yes," I called back over my shoulder as I ran toward home. "But I didn't! Thanks!"

I ran, exhausted, shaking. I came to the end of our path, found a protective spot next to our porch steps. I sank to my knees, head on the ground, in damp bushes and grass, and I thanked God. . . .

—Betty Saunders

•

We all have wakeful nights and at times cannot get some person out of our minds. It is important that we not push away that person and read a book instead or try to get back to sleep without stopping to pray for him, her, or them. However, the middle of the night is not the only time we may suddenly think of someone we haven't thought about for a long time, or of someone else in the same house. "We should make it a practice to always stop to pray for the person, even if it is a very brief time of prayer.

—From AFFLICTION by Edith Schaeffer

LETTERS RECEIVED

"About your editorial "What Is the Answer?" The young people were asking the wrong person (novelist Gunther Grass) for an answer. There certainly is a most satisfying answer to this ever-ever question— fifty years ago I was asking these same questions. I found the answer.

Since Good, Truth, Love, Mind, Spirit, Life and Principle are infinite, they are forever; but I spiritually perceived I can express the love of Love in many ways.

More and more love can be shown and found anywhere we are. "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16), "Beloved now are we the sons of God" (1 John 3:2). . . Man is not mortal— he is the image of love, spiritual. The Bible gives the answers, the material senses cannot understand them."

—M.B. *Greenville, S.C.*

"Prayers? If it hadn't been for prayer, I don't think I could have gotten through some heavy crises in my life. I've prayed pretty hard for people close to me and for strength for myself in facing religion-and-heart-testing situations. Solutions haven't always come, but strength definitely has. And when solutions do, and have come through with what couldn't have been anything else but answers to prayer, my humble thanks have been tremendous.

Sometimes within my heart I whisper a prayer: "Do you mind, dear God, if I have complete faith in You?"

—B.S., *Oswego, N.Y.*

"It was August 15, 1974, that my wonderful neice at the young age of thirty-nine with fast-traveling cancer was graduated from her earthly home to her Haven of Rest. Enclosed is $10 in memory of Carolyn. . . . Thank you for sharing the values of Mildred Seydell in this issue. And thank You, Lord, for my very dear and near friend Miss Kathryn G. Brown, for so many years Executive Secretary of Fellowship in Prayer and now its President. This darling friend remembered me while on vacation. I respect her prayers and those of FIP."

—R.F., *Fort Wayne, Ind.*

RENEW YOUR PRAYER LIFE (Continued from page 18)

laugh at any difficulties that arise. Open my heart to any special need that is present, especially if it is hidden."

Contemplative photography. Contrast in your mind the worst and best photos you have seen of some famous person. One shot captures everything disagreeable about him, the other all that is positive. We do the same with people we know personally: we keep caricatures of those who annoy us and hang portrait photos of our best friends. It is hard to love someone we always picture at his or her worst.

A contemplative experiment you can do all through the day is to make portrait photos of the people you have difficulties with by remembering them at their best and detailing their most attractive qualities. You can go further by picturing them at their worst but with you saying or doing something to change them, such as placing a hand on their arm, or winking, or reminding them of things you know they like. This is not just a gimmick. When you keep picturing a difficult person turning into a pleasant one, your smile becomes genuine.

Spiritual short-story writing. Normally we write the story of life with ourselves as the hero or heroine and everyone else as the supporting cast. Such unconscious relegation of others to second place is a hindrance to understanding and love. One way to break through to seeing others as persons of the same worth as ourselves is to picture them waking up in the morning. What is he thinking about? What is his favorite daydream? What is his worst fear? What has caused him his greatest sorrow? It is impossible to retain our harsh judgments of another once we see life from inside his stream of consciousness. I have been able to forgive many people after doing an exercise of this sort. It incidentally makes me realize that good literature is a kind of redemption. An author takes the most unlikely character and forces us to see him from within and forgive him.

Prayer on the wing. What goes through your mind when you pass people on the street, at the office, or on the wide boulevard of your own fantasies? Very often our thoughts are gossipy: "Gee, she looks terrible today," "It must be hard to work for him," "This city is certainly overpopulated!" A good way to clear your mind of such interior smog is to pray for everyone coming toward you, everyone you pass, each person you think about. Pray for joy for the sad-looking one, for peace for the worried ones. Pray for healing for both the angry and the sick.

On my best days I mix all these varieties of prayer with the Jesus-prayer or the rosary and am refreshed. On my worst days I return to my God with my smudgy negatives and beg Him for a new roll of film—a fresh consciousness, a renewed heart, to love Him and His creations day by day.

CONVERSATION ABOUT CAMP DAVID *(Continued from page 26)*

Why were the meetings held at Camp David?

"Because of the particular nature of the meetings, they had to be held in an isolated place."

What kind of response did you get from your constituents?

"None."

None? That's surprising.

"We only hear when something is controversial. It meant that our constituents supported the meetings. They accepted this approach as the right one."

Has the use of prayer in this way changed your approach to public matters?

"Not at all. I've always held this approach myself. I'm just more enthusiastic. If you wanted to say whether it has changed anything for me, just say I'm more enthusiastic than ever about using prayer in public matters."

WE WELCOME DONATIONS (they are tax-deductible) of any amount. Our purpose is to have as many people as possible participate in Fellowship In Prayer. You, as donor, will receive a card certifying you as an Associate Member in the Fellowship. In addition, you will be sent the equivalent of a subscription to this bi-monthly publication.

Fellowship in Prayer
Room 230, 20 Nassau Street
Princeton, N.J. 08540

Date _____

I enclose $ _____ as a donation to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER toward furthering the work. (All contributions are tax-deductible.) As an Associate Member, I will receive a copy of its bi-monthly.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

THE FRIENDLY VOICE OF SILENCE *(Continued from page 25)*

glass screen, I looked for the silence underneath the explosions of the fire. (Doors and windows of the meetinghouse were shut now, and the silence was obliged to define itself by means of interior noises: the scraping of a shoe across the time-smoothed floor, the rustle of thick, winter clothing.) By now I was adept at finding the silence wherever it was.

As I settled into it this morning, letting it fill my ears, mind, and being, I heard the words: "I'll never abandon you, no matter what you do."

The words were as audible as if they had been spoken to me by my friend. I glanced at him. Seated next to me in the pew, he was wholly caught up in his own experience of the silence, his eyes closed, his hand touching his own cheek like that of a person sound asleep.

The meaning of the words I had heard so clearly was exactly that of my friend's behaviour toward me ever since I asked him, months before, for help. It was exactly that of everyone he had since introduced me to—most of them members of this very meeting. It was the message I needed to hear if I was ever going to get well again. I had felt it before this morning, but this was the first time it had spoken to me so audibly.

Once I heard it, I learned to go and find, first, the silence and then to wait for the voice. It comes *out* of the silence. It doesn't always *come.* But somehow I know it will again. And this knowledge has changed my existence. What I have to do, I now understand, is keep myself ready to hear it when it does. —P.G.

●

" If someone finds it necessary to honor me, " Rebbe Phinas said,
" that means he is more humble than I. Which means he is better
and saintlier than I. Which means that I should honor him.
But then why is he ignoring me ?

— From FOUR HASIDIC MASTERS by Elie Wiesel —

WEEKEND RETREAT (Continued from page 15)

There is a quality of saintly innocence about Ruth, who would not believe that people could be so vindictive. Yet the truth is that some people are not ready for the openness of God's love and are frightened by the possibility of such an experience. They lash out in defense of themselves.

On Sunday, when the retreat ended, we looked around the group. We had formed some very close relationships that would carry on even though made in such a short period of time. We could see the process of inner healing had started for some and had been reinforced in others.

Tenderness and sensitivity were running high as we looked at all our different new friends and then over at Ruth as she stood in the alcove with her aunt, the woman who had been possibly one of the strongest influences in guiding her religious growth. Ruth's smile broke through the strain of such a difficult weekend undertaking with the grace of love. —M.F.

Fellowship in Prayer is growing every day, with your help. Won't you please give us the names and addresses of people to whom you would like us to send a complimentary copy of our publication? Be sure to include ZIP codes.

YOUR MEDITATION

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty:
You do not see that the Real is in your own home,
And you wander from forest to forest listlessly!
Here is the truth! Go where you will, to Benares or to Mathura;
If you do not find God in your own soul,
the world is meaningless to you.

—Kabir (1450-1518)

FELLOWSHIP PRAYER for OCTOBER / NOVEMBER

Choose two world leaders and pray daily that each may be an instrument of God's peace.

If

YOU
WOULD
LIKE US
TO PRAY
FOR YOU OR
FOR OTHERS TOO,
LET US KNOW.

EACH DAY
AT 1:00 P.M. (U.S. Eastern Time)
WE HOLD
INTERCESSORY PRAYER

PHONE (609) 924-0880

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, INC.
Room 230, 20 Nassau Street
Princeton, N.J. 08540
(609) 924-0880

Peter V.K. Funk, Director and Treasurer
Paul Griffith, Editor
Mary P. Funk, Associate Editor
Joy Reynolds, Projects Manager

Board of Trustees

William Hung, President Emeritus
Reuben L. Musey, President Emeritus
Kathryn G. Brown, President
Henry E. Bessire
Narcissa Chamberlain, Vice President
Doris Donnelly
Peter V.K. Funk, Treasurer
Paul Griffith, Secretary of the Corporation
Francis Merchant, Vice President
Edwiene Schmitt, Vice President
Samuel M. Silver

Advisors & Contributing Editors

Masao Abe (Japan)
Ray Allen Albert (Virginia)
Velta Myrle Allen (California)
Elizabeth Barjou (New York)
Dorothy Barko (New York)
Dennis Barry Carroll (Maryland)
Emilie, Lady Coote (England)
Emily Sargent Councilman (N.C.)
Zelma S. Dennis (California)
Georga Palmer Dishner (Tennessee)
Eleanor Ebersole (Pennsylvania)
Marion H. Freeman (Mass.)
Nixeon Civille Handy (Washington)
Catherine C. Houck (Pennsylvania)
William LaFleur (New Jersey)
Georgiana Lieder Lahr (Florida)
Hsuan-min Liu (China)
Mildred Long (California)
Georgia S. Marin (New Hampshire)
Emma S. McLaughlin (Pennsylvania)
Mrs. Reuben L. Musey (Maryland)
Mrs. Charles Oakes (N.C.)
Carla Patsuris (New York)
Dr. Muhammed Abdul-Rauf (D.C.)
Marion J. Richardson (New York)
Swami Ritajananda (France)
Margaret Ruth Thomas (New Jersey)
Dr. Teh-yao Wu (Singapore)

Suggested BOOKS

PRAYER FOR FAMILIES by Barbara Owen Webb (Judson Press, Valley Forge, Pa. Paperback. 31 pages. $1.50) A slim but rich spiritual menu of supplications and statements of thanks for home use. Choice snippets of Scripture are interspersed with original prayers suitable for all occasions. —S.M.S.

LET THE SPIRIT In, Practicing Christian Devotional Meditation, by William E. Hulme (Abingdon, Nashville, Tenn. 94 pages. $5.95.) Dr. Hulme approaches meditation from a holistic basis interpreting body, mind, and spirit as a single unit. Always in Christian focus, he still draws from other traditions and practices. A practical, useful, interesting, and well-written book. —P.F.

THE SUNLIGHT is one and the same wherever it falls, but only bright surfaces like water, mirrors, and polished metals can reflect it fully. So is the divine light. It falls equally and impartially on all hearts, but only the pure and clean hearts of the good and holy can fully reflect it.

—*From* Shri Ramakrishna's Sayings

Dewali, the Feast of Lights, begins at dusk on the night of the new moon of Karttika (October-November). As darkness pulls over the sky, lights spring up all over towns and villages as the Hindu year comes to a close. Small symbolic lamps outline paths and streets and doorways. A time for gaiety but also serious prayer. This is an expression of a thought that ties Hindus to the universal light in all faiths.